

AL EWING
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TRUST ME #1

LOKI

AGENT OF ASGARD



ALL-NEW
**MARVEL
NOW!**

AR

001

TRUST ME.

I KNOW WHAT
I'M DOING.



THIS IS THE STORY OF LOKI.

ADOPTED ON THE BATTLEFIELD BY ODIN, KING OF ASGARD, LOKI WAS THE FOSTER BROTHER OF THOR. THEY DIDN'T ALWAYS GET ALONG.

ADMITTEDLY, THAT WAS BECAUSE LOKI BECAME INVOLVED IN INCREASINGLY WICKED SCHEMES OVER THE LONG CENTURIES, UNTIL EVENTUALLY, HE WAS KNOWN BY ALL AS THE GOD OF EVIL.

AND HE WAS TRAPPED BY THAT DEFINITION - SPIRALING DEEPER INTO INFAMY WITH EACH NEW MISDEED, UNABLE TO ESCAPE HIS ROLE, UNABLE TO ESCAPE HIMSELF. DOOMED TO NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT LOKI - LOKI THE BAD SON, LOKI THE VILLAIN - UNTIL THE DAY HE DIED.


SO...HE DIED.

WHICH WAS, OF COURSE, HIS GREATEST SCHEME OF ALL.

FOR SOON HE WAS REBORN INTO A NEW, YOUTHFUL BODY, FREE TO CHOOSE HIS OWN FATE. WITH THE SWORD OF ASGARD'S EARLIEST HERO IN HIS HAND AND MISSIONS FROM THE ALL-MOTHER, RULING TRIUMVIRATE OF ASGARDIA, TO HELP POLISH HIS SPARKLING NEW REPUTATION.

SO OBVIOUSLY, AFTER ALL THAT, HE WOULDN'T JUST STAB HIS BROTHER RIGHT IN THE BACK.

SURELY.



LOKI: AGENT OF ASGARD IN

TRUST ME

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EARLIER:

NO
ALL-FATHER'S
NOT PROUD
OF YOU...NO
BROTHER ACTS
A-SHAMED...

AND ALL OF
ASGARD WILL
LOVE YOU, WHEN AS
A WIZ-ARD YOU'RE
AC-CLAIMED...

--BUT THESE
DAYS...WELL,
I'M LEARNING
TO SEE THE
MAGIC IN
THEM.

...HELD IN
SUCH HIGH
ES-TEEM! WHEN
PEOPLE SEE ME
THEY WILL SCREAM!
FOR HALF OF
ASGARD'S
FAVORITE
TE-E-EAM...

THE
WIZARD...
AND...

AH,
MIDGARD
SONGS.

ONCE I DESPISED
THESE BITTERSWEET
LITTLE SNATCHES OF
HOPE AND LOSS--

--SO SHORT AND
PETTY, LIKE THEIR
LIVES, SO FAR FROM
THE ROARING HORNS
AND BOARING STRINGS
OF HOME--

...AH.

HELLO,
ALL-MOTHER.

A MOST
SPIRITED
RECITATION,
LOKI. YOU MUST
ENTERTAIN US
NEXT FEAST
DAY.

BUT IN THE
MEANTIME,
WE HAVE A
MISSION
FOR YOU.

THE ALL-MOTHER.
GAEA, FREYJA, IDUNN.
MISSION-GIVERS.

AND THUSLY:

SO LET'S TALK
ABOUT MAGIC.

WE CAN PICKER
ON THE EXACT
RULES, IF
YOU LIKE.

THERE ARE ALL SORTS
OF GRIMOIRES AND
CRYPTONOMICONS. I'VE
GOT AN ADAD MANUAL
SOMEWHERE.

AT THE CORE,
THOUGH...MAGIC IS
TAKING A THOUGHT
AND MAKING IT REAL.

TAKING A LIE
AND MAKING IT
THE TRUTH.

TELLING A STORY
TO THE UNIVERSE SO
UTTERLY COSMICALLY
PERFECT THAT FOR
A SINGLE, SHINING
MOMENT...

...THE WORLD
BELIEVES A
MAN CAN FLY.

WELL, ACTUAL FLYING
IS MORE MY BROTHER'S
THING. HE'S GOT THE
HAMMER FOR IT.

WHAT I HAVE IS A
RATHER WONDERFUL
PAIR OF SEVEN-
LEAGUE BOOTS--

(--CAPABLE OF RUNNING UP
WATERFALLS, RAINBOWS
AND OTHER ASSORTED
IMPOSSIBLE SURFACES.
NOT TO MENTION GLASS--)

--WHICH I LIBERATED
FROM THE LJOSALFAR OF
ALFHEIM, WHO WERE FAR
TOO SELF-ENTITLED TO
APPRECIATE THEM.



MEANWHILE,
MY LOVELY COAT IS
INFUSED WITH SHADOW-
THREAD STOLEN FROM
SVARTALFHEIM--



--MOSTLY USED
TO MAKE VANISHING
CLOAKS.



I HEAR SOME
SECRET AGENTS
ONLY GET CARS...

AVENGERS TOWER.

THOR.
DRINKING.



LOKI.
LAUGHING.



THE MISSION.
WAITING.

CAPTAIN
AMERICA &
IRON MAN.
SPARRING.



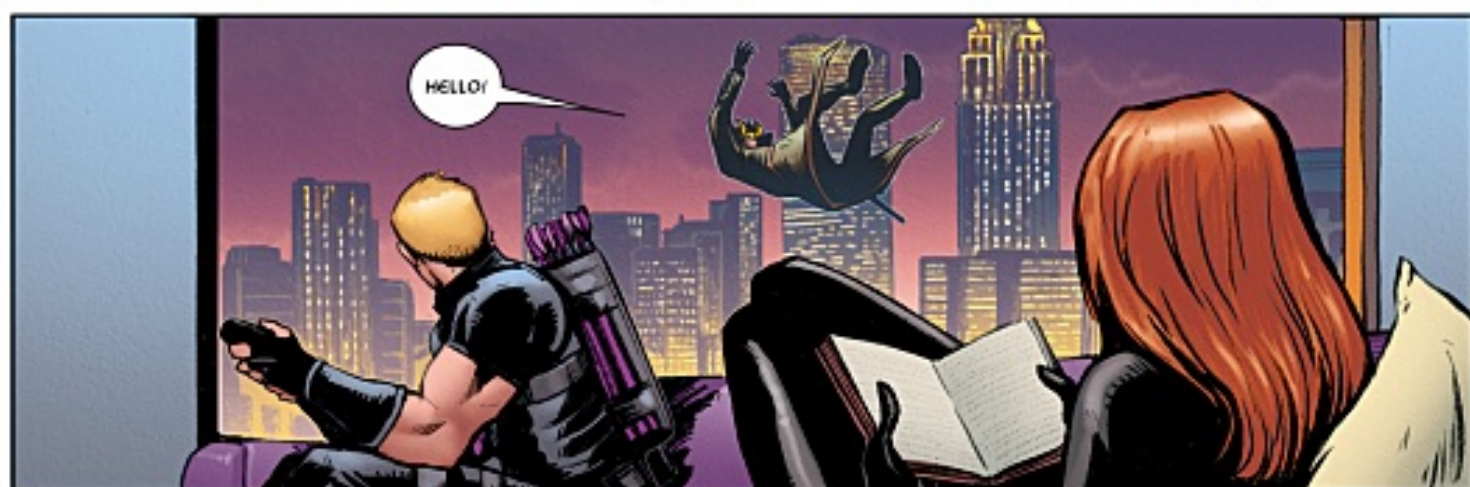
HAWKEYE &
BLACK WIDOW.
RELAXING.



BRUCE BANNER,
AKA THE HULK.
WORKING.







KRRRII-SSHH

NOW, I KNOW
WHAT YOU'RE
THINKING:

WHY AM I FALLING TO MY DEATH WHILE A
MAN WHO MAKES TERRIBLE LIFE DECISIONS
SHOOTS AN ARROW AT MY FACE? EH?

WHY DON'T I JUST **MAGIC** EVERYTHING BETTER?
TELL THE UNIVERSE A NICE BIG STORY?

"THEN LOKI WIGGLED
HIS FINGERS AND
EVERYTHING WAS FINE.

"ALSO HIS MISSION WAS
COMPLETE AND HE HAD A PONY
AND BALLOONS AND A COSMIC
CUBE. THE END."

IT'S
NOT A
VERY GOOD
STORY,
IS IT?

AND...
IMAGINE
YOU HAD
A BIG RED
BUTTON
THAT COULD
SAVE YOU
FROM
ANYTHING.

BUT IF YOU
PRESSED IT
TOO HARD,
YOU'D SPEND
THE REST
OF FOREVER
IN CHAINS.
ON FIRE.

BURNING.

EVERY
THOUGHT,
AN ENDLESS
BURNING.

PERSONALLY? I'D
RATHER HAVE THE
ARROW IN THE FACE.

AT LEAST
IT'S QUICK.

UM,
HELLO, THE
AVENGERS.

WE REALLY
HAVE TO STOP
MEETING
LIKE THIS.



THEY HAVE TO
STOP MEETING
LIKE THIS:

ONCE UPON A TIME, THOR
WAS EXILED TO MIDGARD,
AND SPENT HIS TIME PLAYING
THE ROLE OF THE HERO.

SO HIS BROTHER LOKI--
SMARTING OVER A FEW
MINOR SQUABBLES--
DECIDED TO PLAY THE
ROLE OF THE VILLAIN.

BUT THE GODS ARE
CREATURES OF MAGIC.
CREATURES OF STORY.
WE MUST BE CAREFUL
WHICH ROLES WE
STEP INTO.

THE GOD OF
MISCHIEF BECAME
THE GOD OF EVIL.

BUT LOKI DIDN'T
CARE. HE WAS
ON FIRE NOW.

HE WAS
BURNING.

BACK, BACK! HUMAN
DOLTS--NO MORTAL MAY
LAY A HAND ON LOKI!
AH HA HA!

I HAVE
POWERS YOU
NEVER DREEAMED
OF! AHHH HA HA HA
HAAAA!

FOREVER BURNING.

LOKI MADE A LOT OF SACRIFICES TO STOP BURNING. MOSTLY, HE SACRIFICED OTHER PEOPLE.

I WON'T LET THAT ALL BE FOR NOTHING. I'LL TAKE THE ARROW IN THE FACE EVERY TIME.

YOU'RE SURE THIS IS LOKI? HE LOOKS KIND OF...

...ONE DIRECTION-Y.

IT'S HIM. HE'S STILL WANTED FOR BREAKING INTO A S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER, INCAPACITATING ONE OF OUR TOP AGENTS AND STEALING A VITAL MAGICAL ARTIFACT.*

ALONG WITH COUNTLESS OTHER CRIMES...

*SEE ALL-NEW MARVEL NOW! POINT ONE, UNTRUE BELIEVERS!

ALL IN THE PAST. I'M A CHANGED GOD.

A LOVEABLE SCAMP WITH A HEART OF GOLD, HERE ON A PURELY FRIENDLY VISIT--

YOU ARE NOT MY FRIEND, LOKI.

YOU ARE MY BROTHER, FOR MY SINS.

AND YOU ARE A SERPENT WITH TWO TONGUES.

WHY ARE YOU HERE, FOUL ONE?





ANYWAY, YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOUR FRIENDS STOLE YOUR DNA AND CLONED IT INTO A MURDEROUS MONSTER? YOU KNOW, THAT WHOLE UNPLEASANTNESS?

RRRRR...

UH, LET'S NOT BRING THAT UP AGAIN--

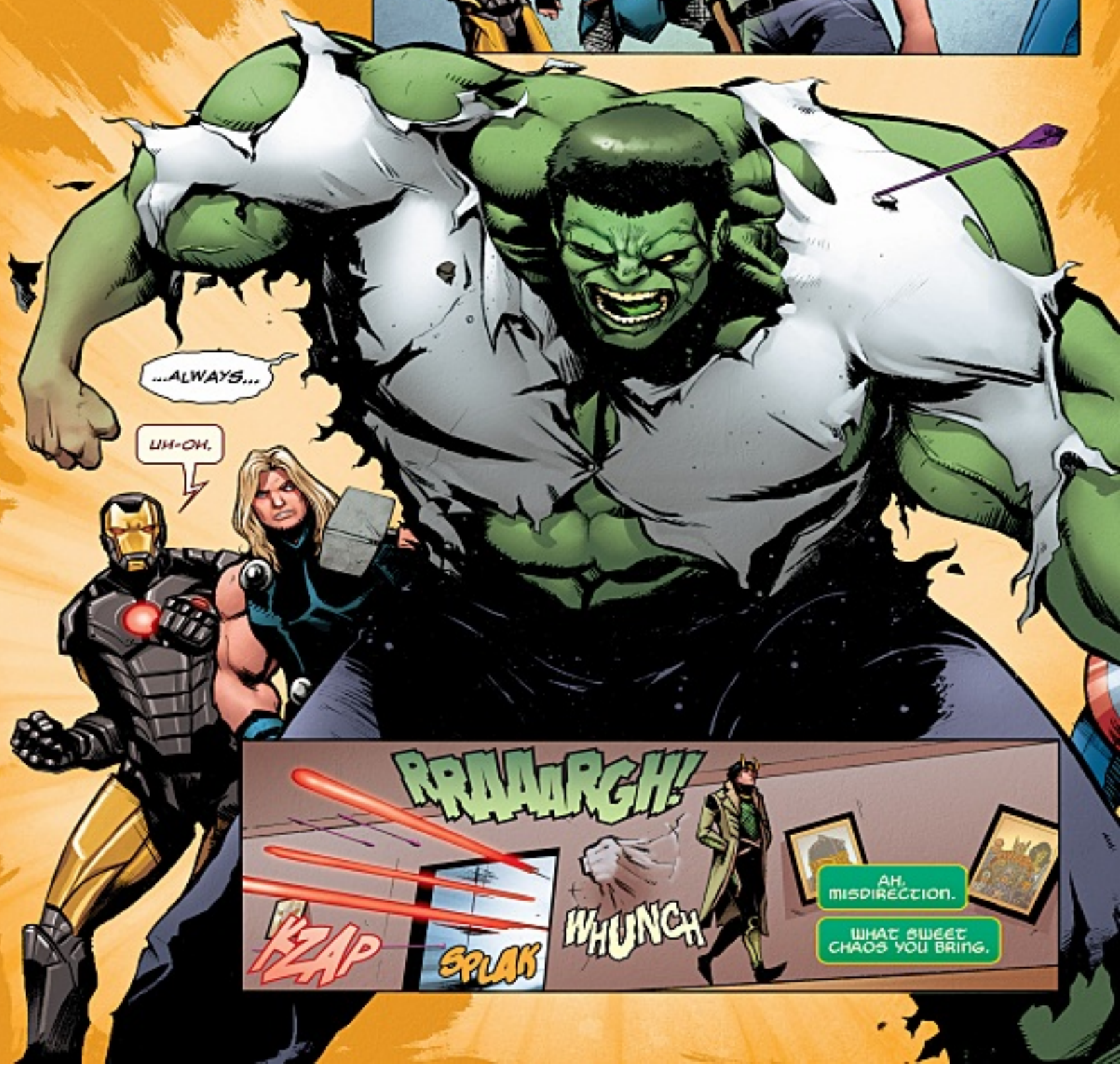
*WE DO! IT WAS IN THE CLASSIC CIVIL WAR!

AND YOU REMEMBER HOW TONY STARK--YOUR FRIEND--PROMISED HE'D ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY, DEFINITELY, NO-CROSSED-FINGERS WIPE THAT DNA DATA FROM HIS SYSTEMS?

AND THAT HE'D NEVER DREAM OF USING IT AGAIN, EVER EVER, CROSS HIS BATTERY-OPERATED HEART?

WE-E-ELL...





SOONISH:

WITH ALL THE YELLING AND ZAPPING AND HULK-SMASHING GOING ON DOWNSTAIRS, NOBODY'S WORRYING ABOUT THIS:

THE FAMOUS AVENGERS DATABASE.

LINKED TO THE S.H.I.E.L.D. DATABASE, WHICH IS LINKED TO THE U.S. GOVERNMENT DATABASE, ET CETERA, ET CETERA. IT'S DATABASES ALL THE WAY DOWN.

ALL OF THEM FULL OF ULTRA-JUICY TOP-SECRET FILES, AND ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE TO HACK...

...FOR ANYONE ELSE.

MACHINES ARE EASIER TO TRICK THAN PEOPLE, BELIEVE IT OR NOT. THEY REALLY ARE INCREDIBLY GULLIBLE.

AND THERE HE IS.

THE LOKI THAT WAS. THE LOKI THAT BURNED.

THIS UNIVERSE PREFERS OLD PATTERNS, OLD CYCLES. IT WOULD PREFER ME IN AN OLD SHAPE.

THESE FILES--THESE STORIES--HAVE A GRAVITY THAT PULLS AT ME. THAT WOULD CRUSH ME BACK INTO WHAT I NO LONGER AM.

AWAY WITH THEM, THEN. I DID TERRIBLE THINGS TO BE LOKI--THINGS THAT HAUNT ME, CRIMES THAT CANNOT BE FORGIVEN--

--BUT I AM LOKI.

AND MORE THAN THAT--

--I AM MYSELF.

WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT...

TRUST ME.







EARLIER:

THOR--

WHO ARE YOU TO LECTURE ME ABOUT HONOR, ALL-MOTHER?

WOMEN BELONG IN KITCHENS, NOT ON THRONES--

BEFORE THAT:

PUT UP A FIGHT, YOU PREENING HALF-A-MAN--

BEFORE THAT, EVEN:

I SAID I WANTED STRONG MEAD! NOT THIS ELF'S WATER, YOU STUPID--

ENOUGH!

THE MISSION:

SOME CORRUPTION HAS ENTERED THOR'S GREAT HEART--ALREADY WEAK FROM MALEKITH'S FOUL TOUCH.*

IF OUR SON COULD SEE WHAT HE HAS BECOME, HE WOULD CAST OUT THE POISON. BUT HE WILL NOT HEAR THE TRUTH...

THE TRUTH, ALL-MOTHER, IS NOT A WEAPON IN MY ARSENAL.

BUT IT WILL BE.

THERE IS A CERTAIN SWORD...

*BEHOLD THE EPIC TALE IN THOR: GOD OF THUNDER #19-21 - L. SANK

THE SWORD IS GRAM--ONCE HELD BY SIGURD, FIRST HERO OF ASGARD. A SWORD OF ANCIENT MAGIC, BATHED IN DRAGON'S BLOOD...

...A SWORD OF TRUTH.

TO SUFFER THE BLADE IS TO SUFFER ALL THE TRUTHS YOU DENY YOURSELF. IT ALWAYS HURTS. SOMETIMES IT KILLS.

AND SOMETIMES IT SAVES YOUR LIFE.

O-OUT, DAMN YOU! GET OUT!

YOU WILL BE A PART OF ME NO LONGER--

THE JAR IS SOMETHING I WHIPPED UP AT HOME.

THERE! SNUG AS A BUG IN A RUG.

AN ASTONISHINGLY CARRYING BUG, mind you.

YOU KNOW, I RATHER THINK I JUST...

...SAVED THE...

OUCH!

I SPOKE ON YOUR BEHALF, BROTHER, BUT MIDGARD'S LAWS ARE AS THEY ARE, AND YOU DID CREATE A MOST TERRIBLE SLASH UPON THEIR INTERNET.

I HACKED THE INTERNET, THOR. IT'S DIFFERENT.

ALTHOUGH I HAVE DONE THE OTHER THING TOO.

LOKI--I KNOW WHAT YOU DID FOR ME. IF NOT FOR YOU, I WOULD HAVE LOST MYSELF.

I WOULD HAVE BECOME BASE--A BULLY AND A FOOL.



I...I WAS THAT BULLY, WHEN WE WERE YOUNG. I KNOW I HURT YOU...

SOMETIMES I WONDER IF I'VE TRULY CHANGED.



IF THE DISTANCE I HAVE COME IS NOT A CONVENIENT LIE I TELL MYSELF.

A TRICK.



PERHAPS.

PERHAPS THAT'S TRUE FOR US ALL.



BUT LET'S SWALLOW THE LIE, BROTHER. LET'S TAKE OURSELVES FOR ALL WE'RE WORTH.

BECAUSE IN THE END, IT'S THE ONLY TRICK WORTH PLAYING.

HA! WELL SPOKEN.

TELL ME NOW, IS THERE TIME FOR A DRINK BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR INEVITABLE ESCAPE...?



ALWAYS, THOR.

ALWAYS.

And finally:

YOU'VE
DONE WELL,
LOKI.

CONTINUE
TO PLEASE US.
AND WHO KNOWS?
PERHAPS YOU CAN
WIPE OUT OUR
RECORDS OF YOUR
HISTORY AS
EASILY AS
MIDGARD'S.

FOR NOW,
OUR DEAL STANDS.
EACH SUCCESSFUL
MISSION MEANS ONE
ANCIENT STORY--ONE
CRIME--PURGED
FROM ASGARD'S
MEMORY.

NEW
LEGENDS
FOR OLD...

THANK YOU,
ALL-MOTHER.
IN RETURN, AS
REQUESTED, I
OFFER YOU A JAR OF
MIXED LIES, LONG
PAST THEIR SELL-
BY DATE.

NOT THAT
I WOULD DARE
TO ADVISE THE
THRONE, BUT I KNOW OF
SEVERAL BOTTOMLESS
CHASMS, BLACK HOLES
AND SUCHLIKE IN
WHICH TO DROP
IT--

I
THOUGHT
SO...

NO, WE ARE
MORE THAN
CAPABLE,
LOKI.

YOU
MAY
LEAVE
US.

LOOK, YOU'RE
NOT GOING TO
OPEN IT, ARE
YOU?

BECAUSE THERE'S
SOMETHING VERY,
VERY FRIGHTENING
ABOUT WHAT'S
IN THAT--

GO.

AS YOU
WISH, ALL-
MOTHER.

GOODBYE,
LOKI.

POP

AND
HELLO...

LOKI



IT SEEMS WE KNOW YOU
BETTER THAN YOU
KNOW YOURSELF,
OLD ONE.

YES, I
REMEMBER YOUR
WISDOM, ALL-MOTHER.
MAY IT SERVE
US BOCH.

my
APOLOGIES FOR
THE...*CONVOLUTED*
NATURE OF THIS
MEETING...



...BUT I
WISHED
TO TALK
ABOUT THE
FUTURE...

NEXT: LOKI GOES SPEED DATING.

HERE'S LOKI-ING AT YOU

Send letters to MHEROES@MARVEL.COM.

Don't forget to mark "OKAY TO PRINT!"

That's the title of this letter-column – until we die or YOU send us something better! While Lee and I and the rest of Team Loki cannot guarantee a response, every dreadful pun you send in will be groaned at by a panel of wincing experts. That's a promise – a LOKI promise! Trust us!

There's no letters to put in this column yet, mind – or none I've seen – so I thought I'd write a letter to YOU, dear reader. About Loki and my own experiences with him...

...which probably date back to roughly 1985 or so. Readers of MIGHTY AVENGERS will be familiar with this period – I was seven or eight years old, there was a newsagent next to a barber shop, and every time I got taken for a haircut I got to buy a couple of American comics.

So Walt Simonson's Loki was My First Loki – and that's a pretty good Loki to start on, you've got to admit. A swaggering, sneering rake, horns trimmed back and a cunning plan in every pocket – there's a sequence in which he tricks a pacifist Balder into chopping his head off, just for a laugh, which sticks firmly in my mind as particularly Loki-esque.

But in terms of this book, the standout issue was probably THOR #353 – the death of Odin. Now, I can't honestly swear to have read this when I was eight – this was before I knew what comic shops or back issues were, so if you missed an issue you just put up with it – but I definitely read it later. And there's that one moment, when Odin's making his final stand against Surtur, and Thor and Loki are at his side, and they all yell out their battle-cry...



It's a comedy moment, obviously. It's meant to show how selfish and venal Loki is – that even in this hour of peril, he's

got nothing to swear himself to but his own skin.

But... when the whole of your reality would rather see you as someone you're not anymore...when the whole universe wants to crush you down into a little box with a label on it and nail the lid down...when your self is a thing you have to fight the very cosmos to decide...

...well, suddenly it's not quite so funny.

Suddenly, it's almost kind of...heroic?

Uh-oh.

Welcome to LOKI: AGENT OF ASGARD – a comic about being For Yourself. And also about swordfights, espionage, casino heists, giant otters, speed dating and dragon-fighting, all beautifully delineated by art supremo "Lovely" Lee Garbett, a man who clearly "gets" Loki in a way that's hard to define but is – I think Loki fans will agree – extremely easy to appreciate.

Join us, why don't you?

- Al Ewing

P.S. If you're reading this after seeing that last page... no, we're not telling.



ISSUE #2

When you see this **AR**, open up the MARVEL AR APP (available on applicable Apple ® iOS or Android ™ devices) and use your camera-enabled device to unlock extra-special exclusive features! (try this page here, it's really cool)





ine